

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A computer system comprising:
  - 2 a protected storage device including a first password stored therein;
  - 3 a BIOS, separate from the protected storage device, including instructions
  - 4 to authenticate a user and to release the first password from the
  - 5 protected storage device if the user is authenticated; and
  - 6 a hard drive to receive the first password from the protected storage
  - 7 device and, in response, to permit an operating system (OS) stored
  - 8 thereon to be loaded.
- 1 2. The computer system of claim 1, wherein the protected storage device is
- 2 soldered to a circuit board of the system.
- 1 3. The computer system of claim 2, wherein the protected storage device is part
- 2 of a chipset of the system.
- 1 4. The computer system of claim 1, wherein the protected storage device is
- 2 contained on a removable smart card.
- 1 5. The computer system of claim 1, wherein the instructions are to authenticate
- 2 the user by a method including verifying a second password, the second
- 3 password being determinable by the user.



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- 1 11. The computer system of claim 10, wherein the protected storage device is  
2 soldered to a circuit board of the system.
  
- 1 12. The computer system of claim 10, wherein the protected storage device is  
2 part of a chipset of the system.
  
- 1 13. The computer system of claim 10, further comprising a set of instructions to  
2 authenticate a user of the computer system and to transfer the first password  
3 from the protected storage device to the drive if the user is authenticated.
  
- 1 14. The computer system of claim 13, wherein the user is located remotely from  
2 the computer system.
  
- 1 15. The computer system of claim 14, wherein the instructions are to authenticate  
2 the user by a method including verifying a second password.
  
- 1 16. A method comprising:  
2 enabling a user to be authenticated to a computer system using a first  
3 method of authentication; and  
4 enabling the first password to be transferred from a protected storage  
5 device to a hard drive of the computer system, if the user is  
6 authenticated, to unlock the drive.

1 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising enabling an operating system  
2 stored on the drive to be loaded after the drive is unlocked.

1 18. The method of claim 16, further comprising enabling a power manager to  
2 relock the drive by causing a voltage supplied to the drive to be reduced.

1 19. A computer system programmed to implement the method of claim 16.  
2

1 20. A machine-readable medium including machine-readable instructions that, if  
2 executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform the method of claim  
3 16.

1 21. The medium of claim 20, further comprising machine-readable instructions  
2 that, if executed by the machine, cause the machine to further load an  
3 operating system stored on the drive after the drive is unlocked.